



# DISARM/GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERS

*PEACE  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
HUMAN RIGHTS*

An Urgent Call to Action  
From:

March 23, 2015

Edward Asner

Dear Friend,

Thanks to our years of advocacy and hard work together, President Obama is moving to normalize relations between the U.S. and Cuba. But it's a precarious, thorny process, with right-wing opponents doing everything they can to derail a complete end to Washington's economic warfare against Cuba. Longtime friends of Disarm/Global Health Partners like you have earned a major victory lap for pressing the administration to modify the Cuba travel ban and enter into direct normalization talks with Cuba.

Now, we need to act together urgently to make sure Washington ends the embargo once and for all!

A bipartisan group of senators has introduced a bill that would lift the trade embargo against Cuba. This bill, S.491, would remove the legal barriers that prevent Americans from conducting business in Cuba. Although President Obama can normalize diplomatic relations and take other measures to further U.S.-Cuba relations, only Congress can completely lift the economic embargo.

In introducing S.491, key sponsor Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) said, "Fifty years of the embargo have not secured our interests in Cuba and have disadvantaged American businesses by restricting commerce with a market of 11 million people just 90 miles from our shores... This legislation will begin to open up new opportunities for American companies, boost job creation and exports, and help improve the quality of life for the Cuban people."

This initiative is bolstered by another new bipartisan Senate bill that would end all restrictions on travel by Americans to Cuba. The "Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2015," S.299, would allow tourism and a broader range of people-to-people contacts. This bill is garnering significant support across political lines, reflecting the sea of change under way in popular opinion on U.S.-Cuba ties.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a vocal backer of S.299, along with a wide range of religious, academic, business and community groups. Republican Sen. Jeff Flake (AZ) has been trying to lift the travel ban for 15 years; now, he says, the political agenda is ripe for

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change: "It's time to allow Americans to travel freely to Cuba. I'm pleased to be joined by my colleagues from both sides of the aisle and I look forward to working with them to pass this long-overdue legislation."

Today, we have a huge opportunity, the brightest chance we've ever had, to end the embargo and travel ban. President Obama's unprecedented moves have dramatically altered the political environment, garnering overwhelming public approval and providing a political opening for S.491 and S.299 to move forward. But we can only succeed by wielding decisive pressure on Congress, where the right is mobilizing to block and reverse progress. Disarm/GHP is mounting a full-drive to pass these vital measures, and all of us need to act now!

I'm enclosing postcards that tell your state's senators to get behind S.491 and S.299, and we're counting on a massive outpouring from Disarm/GHP friends to send a powerful message. With victory so close, your voice can make a real difference. Disarm/GHP will collect and deliver your messages to the Senate, demonstrating a strong show of support for a just U.S. policy toward Cuba. Please sign and return your cards now to make the deepest impact on Congress.

While we're pressing hard for congressional action, Disarm/GHP is building our remarkable campaign to pierce the embargo by providing major shipments of scarce medical supplies to Cuba. Thanks to your longstanding support, we've delivered more than \$122 million in medical aid over the past 21 years. We're stocking our next shipments now, and will supply Cuban hospitals this spring with more than \$500,000 worth of medicine.

Please help us to deal a one-two punch against the embargo now:

First, sign and return the enclosed, pre-addressed postcards to your senators; make them feel the overwhelming popular support for change by backing S.491 and S.299. This is our best opportunity to end a policy that imposes great hardship on the Cuban people;

Second, renew your support for Disarm/GHP's broad advocacy campaign and our lifesaving medical shipments to Cuba by making your tax-deductible gift today. Join me in taking a stand with us for friendship, solidarity and justice.

Your support for Disarm/GHP has accomplished so much. Our huge medical shipments have alleviated the suffering of ordinary Cubans, especially children with cancer and other devastating diseases. And our high-impact advocacy drives have helped get us to the point where we can, finally and completely, end the embargo and travel freely to the only country in the world Washington makes off-limits to Americans.

We've come so far toward victory – now let's go all the way!

With my deepest gratitude,



Edward Asner

P.S.: Your action today will have a vital impact: Please sign the enclosed postcards to your senators demanding passage of S.491 and S.299. It's time to make the embargo and travel ban history. And please renew your support for Disarm/GHP to build this campaign and send scarce, lifesaving medicine to Cuban hospitals. Together, we can ensure victory over half a century of injustice!